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Ex-Hostage Disputes Date of Buckley Death

Associated Press

David P. Jacobsen, who was released by his kidnapers in Lebanon Nov. 2, says he thinks fellow hostage William Buckley died on June 3, 1985, five months before his Moslem captors said he was killed.

"He was delirious. He was regurgitating. He obviously was running a very high fever," Jacobsen said of Buckley in an interview aired last night on the NBC-TV show "1986."

"The guards came to me because I was a hospital director, and said, 'What can we do?' And I said, 'You better take him to see, get a doctor to him.' They said, 'We can't do that.' I made some suggestions to what they could do."

Jacobsen, who was administrator of the American University Hospital in West Beirut at the time of his kidnaping on May 28, 1985, said that he was kept blindfolded and thus never saw Buckley but that he sensed when Buckley died. "There was just a long, long silence," Jacobsen said. "When you're in a small

room . . . there are certain noises that are associated with death.

"And so I firmly believe that William died the evening of June the third."

Asked if Buckley was tortured, Jacobsen said: "I have no way . . . that's just adding to the speculation. I have no way of knowing what happened."

The Washington Post reported last week that Buckley was the Central Intelligence Agency's station chief in Beirut and one of the agency's leading experts on terrorism. The Post said Buckley was tortured and died in Beirut, apparently in June 1985.

The pro-Iranian Islamic Jihad claimed it "executed" Buckley in October 1985 after he "confessed" that he worked for the CIA. His body has never been found.

Jacobsen, who returned to California after his release, said that the hostages' captors provided better treatment after Buckley's death.

"They brought us medicine. They brought a doctor in to see us. They even brought a dentist in," he said. "When the shelling came close, they moved up within the building to safer locations. They didn't want us harmed, okay. We were too valuable. We were precious to them."